

## TRIBUTE TO GRACE JAMES

**HON. KEITH ELLISON**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 24, 2007*

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Grace James of Minnesota, a tireless activist whose contribution to the North Side of Minneapolis cannot be overstated. Though it saddens me to report that Mrs. James passed away recently at the age of 93, I am humbled and inspired by the example she has set through her advocacy for the North Side, a neighborhood she endlessly fought to support, a community she tirelessly worked to build.

It is hard to think of a facet of community that Mrs. James didn't work to improve. During her career she served on numerous housing boards where she strived to ensure that everyone could find a place to live and that the North Side had open arms to those needing a home. Through organizations such as Minnesota Cooperative Housing and the North Side Residents Redevelopment Council, the work she began in the 1950s to this day helps to maintain and benefit the community she loved.

Mrs. James was also an activist in local education, working as a teacher's aide in the 1960s and as an organizer for the teachers union in the 1970s. Her work for North Side youth didn't stop at the schoolhouse doors, however; she once worked as a member of the board of the YWCA, supported the Campfire Girls, and served as the president of the Jack and Jill Club, introducing black children to cultural sites and events—and raising scholarship money along the way.

Part of what makes Mrs. James so remarkable, her example so admirable, is how she fought on a personal level. Her daughter Noel remembers that, outside of the councils and non-profits, the schools and unions, Mrs. James made the time to make sure neighborhood kids kept out of trouble. She defines what it is to fight at the grassroots level, leaving former Minneapolis City Councilwoman Jackie Cherryhomes to remark how "she believed in the power of community long before anyone talked about it."

In closing, Madam Speaker, I wish to express my condolences to those surviving Mrs. James: her daughters, her grandchildren, her great-grandchild, and the community she worked for, the community she loved. It is an honor to stand in recognition of the memory and life of such an illustrious woman as she. Mrs. James, thank you.

HONORING STEPHANIE HUNT, MRS.  
UNITED STATES 2007

**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 24, 2007*

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate Stephanie Hunt of Pittsfield Township, Michigan. Mrs. Hunt was recently crowned Mrs. United States 2007.

Though winning the title of Mrs. United States is an intrinsically praiseworthy event, Mrs. Hunt's coronation is especially significant

for two reasons. Not only is she the first woman from Michigan to win in the pageant's 21-year history, but she is also the first African American to ever win the title. It is for these reasons that I want to call attention to this woman's remarkable accomplishments.

As a spokesperson for and executive committee member of the National Organization for Rare Diseases, Mrs. Hunt has been a tireless advocate for patients suffering from rare diseases. She is especially interested in raising awareness of Rubenstein-Taybi syndrome, a rare developmental disorder that afflicts her four-year-old son, Donnie. Winning the title of Mrs. United States has given Mrs. Hunt the opportunity to bring this and other diseases to national prominence.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all of my colleagues join me in commending Mrs. Hunt not only for winning Mrs. United States, but also for her advocacy on behalf of the 25 million Americans suffering from rare disorders. She serves as a role model for married women across the nation, "encouraging them to strive for their dreams throughout each season of life."

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 24, 2007*

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 687, 688, 689 and 690, had I been present, I would have voted, "yea."

## MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

**HON. TOM UDALL**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 24, 2007*

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, the last time Congress raised the minimum wage, gas prices hovered around \$1.33 a gallon, Enron wasn't even in business and America had never heard of the iPod, much less the iPhone. Since then, the cost of living has risen 26 percent, while the real value of the minimum wage has been eroded by inflation to its lowest level since 1955.

Thirteen million American workers will get a pay raise thanks to the minimum wage increase that begins today. That means an estimated six million children will see their parents' incomes rise, an increase of \$2.10 an hour that will give families an additional \$4,400 a year to meet critical needs. That's 15 months of groceries, over two years of health care, 19 months of utilities, or 20 months of child care.

I wish I could say it took great political courage to back this wage increase. However, it did not. More than 85 percent of Americans support raising the minimum wage. The American people have been ready; what was missing was the Congressional leadership. For more than nine years, the Republican-controlled Congress refused to raise the minimum wage. The new Democratic leadership raised it in just seven months. For four years, the old Congressional leadership let Pell Grant values

stagnate. Last week, Congress passed the biggest investment in college aid since the GI Bill. And for almost four years, Republicans in Congress gave President Bush a blank check to fight a misguided war in Iraq. Since January, Congress has told the President again and again that it's time for a change.

The new Congressional leadership has shown that it will do what the old Congressional leadership would not; it will fight for America's working families. Today's wage increase is just one sign of changed priorities in Washington. Congress has begun to deliver real support to those who need it most.

With all of the talk in Washington, we can lose track of what politics means in the everyday lives of Americans. Anybody who claims that it does not matter who controls Congress should go talk to a worker who just took home a larger paycheck. That larger paycheck was only possible because of a new Congressional leadership and a new Congress. I am proud to serve in that Congress.

## TRIBUTE TO TOMMY "T.K." MARTIN

**HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 24, 2007*

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, today I stand before you to honor a fallen hero, Tommy "T.K." Martin. Tommy, who served as the Douglas County Sheriff Department's chief deputy, was shot in the line of duty last month while pursuing two men wanted for armed robbery. After a valiant month-long struggle, Tommy passed away early last week at the age of 59.

Our entire Nation is indebted to T.K. for his life-long dedication to his community and his country. He proudly served as a member of the Navy during the Vietnam War. After a committed tenure as a naval officer, he began his career with the Illinois State Police in 1978 and remained an important member of the crime scene investigation unit until his retirement in 2002. However, when he was offered the position of chief deputy in 2004, T.K. came out of retirement, as he could not resist the opportunity to continue his life of public service.

Last Tuesday, we lost an exceptional and venerable civil servant who was a role model for all law-enforcement officers with whom he interacted during his decades on the police force. T.K. put his life on the line each and every day to ensure the safety of the citizens of the 15th District of Illinois, and for that we will be forever grateful.

While T.K. was tragically taken from us all too early, his mark on our community and our Nation will continue for years to come. His colleagues and fellow citizens will never forget his work ethic, loyalty, devotion to God, and infectious sense of humor. Whether it was working in the CSI unit or participating in events at his beloved Tuscola United Church of Christ, T.K. touched all of those he came in contact with. He died doing what he loved most: protecting his community.

T.K., a grateful Nation thanks you for a lifetime of noble service. You are a hero and role model for all Americans. You will be sorely missed but your spirit will always remain with us.